security lapses that led to the assassination of General A. S. Vaidya at Pune; and

(b) if so, the outcome of the investigations and whether any responsibility has been fixed for the security lapses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) The arrangements made for the security of General A. S. Vaidya have beeen looked into. The facts revealed have been brought to the notice of the Government of Maharashtra for taking further necessary action.

Technology for Coal Gasification, etc.

3228. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether any research projects have so far been undertaken for development of technology, indigenously, for coal gasification process and off-shore mining;

(b) if so, what are the details of progress made in this regard; and

(c) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to undertake any pilot projects for testing commercial viability?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN) : (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Number of Urban and Rural Post Offices

3229. DR. BAPU KALDATE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of Post Offices of different categories in each circle as on the 1st April, 1984, on 1st April, 1985, on 1st April, 1986 and on 31st October, 1986;

(b) what is the number of urban and rural Post Offices opened and closed, year-wise, in each circle during the said period;

(c) whether there is any proposal to tighten the norms for urban and rural Post Offices; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Information as on 1-4-84, 1-4-85 and 1-4-86 is furnished in the enclosed Statement-I (*See* below). Information as on 31-10-86 is under collection and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) The norms for opening of Post Offices in urban areas have been revised. As regards norms for rural areas, the matter is not yet finalised.

(d) The urban norms which were in force earlier and those as revised with effect from 21-10-86 are furnished in the enclosed Statement-II.

Statement-I

Year	HO's	DSO'S	EDS's	EDBO's	Total
1 4 84	852	24358	31993	107516	144719
1 4 85	852	24415	6269	113339	144785
1 4 86	849	24470	3768	115309	144396

HO's	Head Post Offices
DSO's	Departmental Sub Post Offices.
EDSO's	Extra-Departmental Sub Post Offices.
EDBO's	Extra-Departmental Branch Post Offices.

Statement-II

Norms for opening of post offices in urban areas which were in force before revision

Post offices in urban areas may be opened subject to the following conditions:

(i) The post office should be self-supporting.

(ii) The minimum distance between two post offices should be 1 kilometre in cities with a population of 20 lakh and above. In other urban areas, the minimum distance between two post offices should be 1.5 kilometre.

(iii) PMG can relax the distance condition in 10 per cent of the cases every year.

(iv) EDBO's can be opened in urban areas only in exceptional cases like slum areas where suitable Departmental buildings on reasonable rent are not available. EDSO's may be opened in urban areas provided they are expected to be self-supporting and have a workload ranging between 4 to 5 hrs. per day. Opening of EDSO's in urban areas should not result in closing down of DSO.

Revised Norms introduced with effect from 21-10-86.

Post office in urban areas may be opened subject to the following conditions:

(i) Initially the post office should be self-supporting but at the time of the first annual review it should show a 5 per cent profit to be eligible for further retention.

(ii) The minimum distance between two post offices is now raised to 1.5 kms in cities with a population of 20 lakhs and above and 2 kms. in other urban areas. No two delivery offices however, should be closer than 5 kms from each other. Further, a delivery post office should have a minimum of 7 postmen's beats.

(iii) No extra departmental post offices will be opened in future in urban areas.

(iv) Heads of Circles will continue to have powers to relax the distance condition in 10 per cent of the cases as before but this power should be excercised personally and not by delegation.

These orders do not authorise opening of new post offices during the currency of the ban on creation of posts.

Memorandum to P.M. for special status of Assam

3230. SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Minister of State for Home Affairs Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad had recently addressed a letter to a Member of the Rajya Sabha specifically stating that the Prime Minister had received a memorandum on August 14 to make certain proposals to amend the Constitution to secure for Assam a special status somewhat similar to the provisions of Article 370 and if so, whether those proposals are under consideration of the Government; and

(b) what are the details of the proposals and whether Government had agreed to the demand made by All Assam Gan Sangram Parishad?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI): (a) and (b) In response to a mention of a matter of urgent public importance by a Member of Rajya Sabha, the Minister of State for Home Affairs had addressed a letter to him in September, 1986, intimating that the Prime Minister had received a Memorandum dated 14th August, 1986 from the All Assam Students Union containing their proposals for constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards in terms of Clause 6 of the Assam Accord. This memorandum contains, *inter-alia*